

Fairfax County Park Authority 2006-2010 Balanced Scorecard Strategic Plan



Adopted November 8, 2006



Foreword

It is with great pleasure that we present to you the Fairfax County Park Authority 2006-2010 Strategic Plan. The Park Authority has seized upon this opportunity to begin a new approach to strategic planning, involving:

Strategy as an ongoing process – Managing our strategy will be an ongoing activity, taking place at all levels of the organization.

A focus on the strategic, as opposed to the tactical – This Plan, and the Strategy Map created as a part of it, have helped us to focus on the horizon and keep our planning on a strategic level.


Strategic alignment – The Strategy Map has helped us to better understand and communicate the linkages in our work.

A proactive measurement approach – The measures developed as part of the agency's balanced scorecard will be reviewed throughout the life of the plan, so that we can continually fine-tune our efforts.

More extensive employee participation – Staff from across the organization, who will commit their time and talents to seeing this plan through, were involved in identifying the key strategic projects we could undertake to help accomplish our strategic goals.

A staff Steering Committee was chartered in the fall of 2005 to help guide the planning efforts. This Plan is the result of working in conjunction with the Park Authority Board, agency senior leadership, and staff from across the organization.

We look forward with great anticipation to working with our strategic partners, the citizens of Fairfax County, and other key stakeholders to carry out this plan. And, we eagerly anticipate celebrating with them the successes that are sure to occur along the way.



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Park Authority Board



Michael A. Kane, Director
Fairfax County Park Authority

Acknowledgements

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About this Plan

In the spring of 2005, Park Authority leadership began identifying focus areas for the agency's 2006-2010 Strategic Plan. During a series of workshops with the Park Authority Board, a number of strategic areas were identified, through a combination of reflecting back upon the 2002-2006 strategic plan, and considering the opportunities and challenges the Park Authority faces through 2010.

*Setting a goal is not the main thing.
It is deciding how you will go about achieving it and staying with that plan.*

- Tom Landry

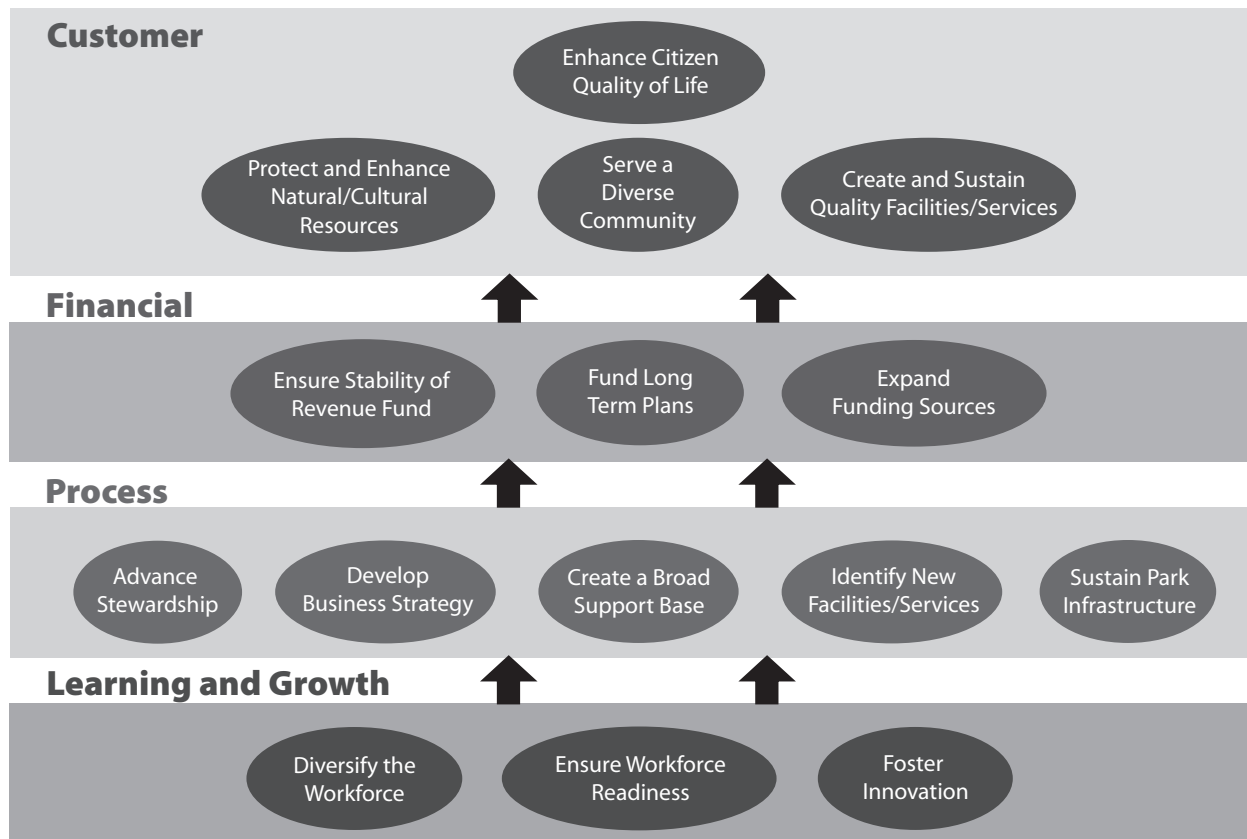
Unlike the processes involved with previous plans, this plan incorporates extensive employee input that was used to help determine the projects we can undertake to help us reach our strategic goals. As the people in the organization who will have the most direct impact on our success, our employees deserve the opportunity to help decide how their work will look. And, they know from experience what is needed, and what is likely to meet with success.

Throughout the development of the plan, agency management held approximately one dozen outreach sessions with staff from across the organization. The suggestions from those sessions were further vetted using the County's Group Decision Support Center technology. At those sessions, employees reviewed and ranked the proposed initiatives, which played a tremendous role in helping to shape the final strategic projects included in this Plan.

It is important to note that the initiatives contained herein represent some of the strategic projects the agency will be undertaking in order to influence our strategic objectives. There are many more activities that will take place on a daily basis across the organization that will also impact our performance with regard to these objectives. The purpose of this Strategic Plan is not to include every task and function that the agency is engaged in, but to identify areas where we must respond to change in order to carry out our mission and remain vital to Fairfax County residents. In essence, this plan outlines the areas where the focused efforts of the organization will be required, recognizing that these efforts may continue to evolve or expand to meet the changing circumstances, needs and expectations of those who live, work and play in Fairfax County.

In follow-up to this agency-wide plan, it is anticipated that divisions will either continue or begin division-based planning activities that are related to the agency's strategic objectives, and that assist in impacting the agency's strategic measures. In addition, the feedback obtained from staff throughout the development of this plan will be built into the division's annual operating plans. In this way, the entire organization will be working collaboratively to influence the measures contained within the 2006-2010 Strategic Plan.

The Strategy Map and Balanced Scorecard



The Park Authority has committed to using the Balanced Scorecard approach in developing the 2006-2010 Strategic Plan. Under this approach, the agency has identified outcome measures for the strategic objectives. By identifying measures, we are better able to gauge our progress towards accomplishment of the goals we have set for ourselves over the next five years.

Using an approach to strategic management developed by Drs. Robert Kaplan and David Norton, and taking into account the strategic areas identified by the Board in spring 2005, the Park Authority worked to develop an agency Strategy Map and Balanced Scorecard. Used collectively, these two tools will be used to communicate our goals - and progress in reaching them - to governing bodies, citizens, stakeholders, and staff.

The Strategy Map serves as the foundation for the Plan, and it describes our strategy through explicit cause-and-effect relationships. The Strategy Map also serves as a model of how the Park Authority creates value.

The Park Authority has dedicated significant time and resources in the production of this Map in an effort to:

- Provide a simple visual depiction of how the organization aligns its resources to achieve a common goal

- Link our strategic objectives that collectively will help us to further the agency's mission
- Help unify components of the Strategic Plan so each objective is not seen merely as a discrete goal to accomplish.

Cause-and-effect relationships are described on the Map in terms of four different perspectives of the organization: Learning and Growth, Process, Financial, and Customer.

The **Learning and Growth** perspective, which appears as the foundation for the map, describes how we develop our employees and organizational culture to respond to our agency's mission and vision.

The **Process** perspective answers the question: "To satisfy our customers and financial objectives, which business processes must we excel at?"

The **Financial** perspective answers questions including "If we succeed, how will we look to our taxpayers? What are our financial objectives with respect to satisfying our customers?"

In the **Customer** perspective, the organization attempts to answer "To achieve our vision, how must we look to our customers?"

Strategic planning is worthless — unless there is first a strategic vision.

- John Naisbitt

Our Strategic Objectives

Enhance Citizen Quality of Life: This is the overarching objective of the 2006-2010 Strategic Plan.

Protect and Enhance Natural and Cultural Resources: Reflects the first half of the Park Authority mission statement, which states “to set aside public spaces for and assist citizens in the protection and enhancement of environmental values, diversity of natural habitats and cultural heritage to guarantee that these resources will be available to both present and future generations.”

Create and Sustain Quality Facilities and Services: Reflects the second half of the Park Authority mission statement, which states “to create and sustain quality facilities and services which offer citizens opportunities for recreation, improvement of their physical and mental well being, and enhancement of their quality of life.”

Serve a Diverse Community: To create and develop programs, facilities and services that engage and meet the needs of our diverse community.

Ensure Stability of the Revenue Fund: To develop plans and actions to grow and stabilize the revenue fund.

Fund Long-Term Plans: To seek and obtain funding via bonds, general fund, revenue fund and other governmental funding sources to fund our long-term plans.

Expand Funding Sources: To develop partnerships and other non-traditional funding sources that create new, diverse opportunities to secure money or in-kind services.

Advance Stewardship: To exercise our obligation and responsibility to protect and preserve our natural and cultural resources, and position the Park Authority as a leader in the education, advocacy and demonstration of stewardship best practices.

Develop a Business Strategy: To develop and implement long-term plans that will accomplish targeted financial and service goals.

Create a Broad Support Base: To position ourselves in the community at large through demonstrating the value that is received from our organization. To communicate our unique identity so people know, value, and support us.

Identify New Facilities and Services: To identify opportunities for new facilities and services to meet public need due to population growth, changing demographics and leisure preferences.

Sustain Park Infrastructure: To develop plans and resources to maintain, restore and eventually replace equipment and facilities to meet needs now and into the foreseeable future.

Diversify the Workforce: To recruit and develop a paid workforce reflective of the growing diversity of Fairfax County. To educate, train and actively encourage employees to respect, understand, appreciate and accept differences.

Ensure Workforce Readiness: To recruit, prepare and engage our paid workforce to meet future business challenges and expectations.

Foster Innovation: To create a leadership culture that fosters practices and processes that remove barriers to innovation consistent with accountability. To empower employees to take, or recommend, actions that enhance customer service, establish more efficient business processes, and promote new business opportunities.

The following three strategic objectives, contained within the customer perspective on the Strategy Map, are reflective of the Park Authority's vision and mission statements. As such, they reside at the pinnacle of the Strategy Map, and are the ultimate end outcomes we seek to achieve for the citizens of Fairfax County.

Enhance Citizen Quality of Life

This is the overarching objective of the 2006-2010 Strategic Plan. This strategic objective aligns with the Park Authority vision, which states "The Fairfax County Park Authority strives to inspire and sustain a passion for parks and leisure experiences that enhance our community's quality of life." We believe that successful accomplishment of the strategic objectives contained within the Learning and Growth, Process, and Financial perspectives will result in an enhanced quality of life for Fairfax County citizens.

The Authority was created by action of the Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County, Virginia, at its meeting on December 6, 1950, by Resolution, in accordance with the provisions of the Park Authorities Act.¹ Under this Act, the Park Authority is "...deemed to be performing essential governmental functions providing for the public health and welfare". Our responsibilities are massive, and include acquiring, purchasing, leasing, constructing, improving, operating and maintaining parks; regulating the uses of all lands and facilities under control of the authority; issuing revenue bonds; and entering into contracts with entities including the federal government, the Commonwealth, and other political subdivisions.

These powers are granted to us in the interest of assuring an enhanced quality of life for our citizenry complete with quality recreation facilities, top-notch services, and protected resources, both natural and cultural.

Protect and Enhance Natural and Cultural Resources

This strategic objective reflects the first half of the Park Authority mission statement, which states "to set aside public spaces for and assist citizens in the protection and enhancement of environmental values, diversity of natural habitats and cultural heritage to guarantee that these resources will be available to both present and future generations." We believe that successful accomplishment of the strategic objectives contained within the Learning and Growth, Process, and Financial perspectives, particularly as related to stewardship and implementation of the long-term natural and cultural resource management plans, will result in an increased ability of the Park Authority to protect and enhance the natural and cultural resources that have been entrusted to our care.

Create and Sustain Quality Facilities and Services

This strategic objective reflects the second half of the Park Authority mission statement, which states "to create and sustain quality facilities and services which offer citizens opportunities for recreation, improvement of their physical and mental well being, and enhancement of their quality of life." We believe that successful accomplishment of the strategic objectives contained within the Learning and Growth, Process, and Financial perspectives, particularly related to identifying new facilities and services, sustaining park infrastructure, and ensuring stability of the revenue fund, will result in an increased ability of the Park Authority to create and sustain quality facilities and services that our citizens desire and deserve.

The following strategic objectives have been developed as part of the 2006-2010 Strategic Plan. They are reflective of what we seek to accomplish as an organization over the next five years. We believe that successful accomplishment of these objectives will contribute to our ability to create and sustain quality facilities and services, protect and enhance natural and cultural resources and, ultimately, ensure an enhanced quality of life for the citizens of Fairfax County.

Serve a Diverse Community

This strategic objective is focused on the need to create and develop programs, facilities and services that engage and meet the needs of our diverse community. Use of the park system, its services, and offerings should reflect the changing demographics of the county population. In order to do so, park facilities and services must reflect the needs and recreational interests of all county residents, which will require community engagement on a variety of levels.

Background

Population trends that will affect park system use in the future include rapid cultural and ethnic diversification, changing patterns of income, the long-established trend of population aging and a decline in youth participation in fitness and recreation activities.

Fairfax County's non-white community grew nearly three times faster than the population as a whole between 1980 and 2004. Approximately 14% of the County's total population was comprised of racial and ethnic minorities in 1980; by 2004, they represented 39.5% of the population. The number of residents speaking a language other than English at home more than doubled between 1990 and 2004, growing from 143,418 to 300,416. Foreign-born residents represented the majority of population growth (77%) over this same time period.²

As the face of Fairfax County continues to change, the Park Authority will be challenged to adapt its facilities and programs to address the needs of new and increasingly diverse user groups. Meeting the needs of new residents will help them view parks as inviting gathering places and an important source of community identity. Ensuring parks can accommodate large group gatherings and non-traditional sports are a few of the ways that the park system can become central to an increasingly diversified population.

Income patterns have also changed, with the gap between families with the most and least income widening over the last decade. In fact, the gap between families with the lowest and highest incomes grew by more than 50% between 1990 and 2000.³ Recent community-wide surveys conducted by the Park Authority indicate that use of parks is somewhat below average for racial/ethnic minority groups, but is lowest among lower income households in Fairfax County.⁴

Busy work and family schedules also make it difficult for people to develop a sense of community. Citizens become isolated within their work places and homes, and it is not uncommon for neighbors to not know each other. Community-wide surveys conducted by the Park Authority consistently find that 80% or more of Fairfax County households consider parks as very or extremely important to their quality of life. As residents turn to their local parks to spend precious free time, the Park Authority is positioned to increase its role as an

integral component of the county's community building initiatives that can help to rebuild a sense of, and pride in, community. Fairfax County parks will increasingly play a vital role in community building by providing an affordable place to gather, recreate, and interact with others.

Following the national trend, the population is also growing older. The median age of Fairfax County residents has increased by more than 12 years since 1970. Thirty years ago, just over three percent of the county population was age 65 or older. In 2004, that percentage was 8.6 percent and by 2020, it is estimated to reach 11.6 percent. The sheer number of Fairfax County residents 65 years and older increased six fold, from 13,674 persons in 1970 to 85,619 in 2004.⁵

The population is also largely "aging in place," bringing "new demands for mobility, affordable and accessible housing, recreational, economic and volunteer opportunities."⁶ As a result, it will be increasingly important that seniors perceive Fairfax County as a livable community, a community "that has affordable and appropriate housing, supportive community features and services, and adequate mobility options, which together facilitate personal independence and the engagement of residents in civic and social life."⁷

National trends show that older Americans are increasing their participation in both recreation and fitness activities.⁸ This pattern is reflected locally as well, and the Park Authority's already strong position in providing fitness, recreation and leisure activities for seniors positions it well to further serve the emerging needs of the senior population.

National trends also indicate a general pattern of declining youth participation in fitness and recreation activities. Analysis presented in the Park Authority's 2005 Recreation Trend Report indicated that between 2001 and 2004 child (ages 6 to 11) participation declined in 71% of the 60 activities studied. The outlook among adolescents (ages 12 to 17) was even bleaker. Teen participation dropped in 81% of the activities analyzed.⁹ A comparison of Fairfax County demographic and Park Authority program enrollment data shows that local participation in fitness and recreation programs among children is high, while participation among adolescents is considerably less.¹⁰

Perhaps a consequence of youth inactivity is that youth obesity is becoming more prevalent – to the extent that excess weight among youth is now a national concern. Nationwide, 30% of children (ages 6 to 11) and adolescents (ages 12 to 19) are overweight and more than 15% of each group is considered obese. Excess weight, particularly in adolescence, is associated with increased health risks and mortality later in life. The obesity rate quadrupled among children and more than doubled among adolescents between 1971 and 2000 according to statistics from the CDC National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey.¹¹

In issue papers prepared by the National Recreation and Park Association, findings indicate that:

- Active users of public parks have a lower body mass index than did people who use parks passively or not at all.
- Citizens who had better access to parks, visited parks more frequently and engaged in physically active park behaviors also made fewer visits to the doctor.

- As health statistics demonstrate a greater need for citizens to become more active and health conscious, the need to provide accessible public state and local park and recreation facilities becomes even more important. ¹²

Also noted by Vice Admiral Richard H. Carmona, M.D. M.P.H., FACS United States Surgeon General, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, “the good news is that obesity and its co-morbidities are preventable through healthy eating – nutritious foods in appropriate amounts – and physical activity...we are working together to reduce barriers to physical activity at the community level and to provide opportunities for increased physical activity. We need parks and recreational facilities within a short walk or ride from people’s homes.” ¹³

In summary, “Outdoor Recreation offers a solution to the pressing problems of obesity and inactivity.... Traditionally, outdoor recreation was synonymous with the backcountry. But as Americans battle the inactivity crisis, and outdoor enthusiasts increasingly seek activities that can be done before dinner, close to home recreation opportunities are more important than ever”. ¹⁴

Strategic Initiatives

Engage in community outreach to increase awareness of existing services.

Efforts may include:

- Partner with County agencies and public schools to conduct community building and outreach events in targeted communities.
- Begin Hispanic and Korean media awareness campaign in radio and print media. Increase participation among “tweeners” and adolescents.
- Identify standard documents to be translated into other languages (e.g. public hearing notices, “pardon our dust” letters).
- Identify methods to tap into overall ethnic groups to reach diverse customers (e.g. community groups, county outreach efforts).

Develop strategic partnerships.

Efforts may include:

- Actively pursue and negotiate appropriate long-term partnerships to create, develop and/or operate new park facilities.
- Partner with Fairfax County Public Schools for youth wellness and fitness.
- Partner with Community and Recreation Services’ senior centers for senior wellness and fitness.
- Partner with health care organizations (INOVA, Kaiser) for youth wellness.

Identify community needs.

Efforts may include:

- Coordinate intra-agency to identify common goals and dovetail efforts in gaining community input.
- Conduct focus groups with targeted communities to develop better understanding of park and service needs and use practices.

Improve access to park services for low-income residents.

Efforts may include:

- Begin process to work with other county agencies on methods to identify citizens in need and manage access to facilities in ways that do not negatively impact the revenue fund.

Actively promote youth fitness and wellness.

Efforts may include:

- Collaborate with Fairfax County Public Schools Health and Fitness High School Department Chairpersons to develop alternative physical education opportunities for high school students.
- Collaborate with Fairfax County Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services to partner in promoting healthy food choices in schools and park facilities through joint marketing efforts and healthier vending choices.
- Implement and evaluate FUN-ctions pilot program in Rec-PAC.

Continue to focus on serving elderly residents as the County population ages.

Efforts may include:

- Evaluate current services targeted to seniors and identify opportunities to attract this target market in ways that do not negatively impact the revenue fund.
- Collaborate with the Department of Community and Recreation Services' Senior Centers to meet senior service needs without duplicating or competing services.

Implications

The face of the County continues to change and the nature of public recreation and use of parks changes with it as the population becomes more diverse. The Park Authority has a responsibility to serve all citizens of the County, providing them with effective service and the high quality of life to which they have become accustomed. It is also in the Park Authority's best interest to recognize and adapt to the changing composition of the population. Failure to understand and react to these changes places the Park Authority at risk of becoming less relevant to the community over time.

Ensure Stability of the Revenue Fund

This strategic objective is focused on the need to develop plans and actions to grow and stabilize the revenue fund over the next 10 years as expenditures are projected to outpace revenue.

Background

Over the last several years, the Park Revenue Fund net revenues have been declining, and the Park Authority projects that expenses could soon begin exceeding revenue in this Fund. As the Park Authority must maintain a balanced budget, it is imperative that we ensure stability of the revenue fund. The outlook results from a number of factors, including the following:

- **Operational expenses growing faster than revenues.** Expense growth has resulted from increased personnel expenses due to Pay for Performance, reclassifications, and growth in hourly pay rates for exempt staff due to competition; increased utility costs; and increased maintenance costs due to facility aging. Much of the growth in expenses results from county policies and economic factors that are not easily controlled by staff.
- **Shifts of non-revenue related General Fund expenses into the Revenue Fund.** Periodically, expenses are shifted to the Revenue Fund when funding is eliminated from the General Fund budget and the Park Authority has chosen not to reduce services. Most recently this involved a division manager position and overhead support costs.
- **GASB 34 changes in accounting requirements.** These changes required that, beginning in FY 2003, the Park Authority account for deferred revenue as a liability.
- **Revenue bond debt service and bond indenture requirements.** Debt service expenses for Laurel Hill Golf Club begin in FY 2007. In addition, the terms of the agency's Revenue Bond indenture limit the magnitude of private revenue activities that can occur at bond-funded facilities. This limits the opportunity to use privatization as a means to expand services and revenue streams.
- **Projection model assumes status quo operations.** The Comprehensive Fund Management Plan model does not incorporate any assumptions regarding revenue growth from potential new facilities or services that may be developed in the mid- to long-term period of the plan, including picnic facilities, Water Mine expansion and other Lake Fairfax improvements, and future RECenter expansions.
- **Limited impact of fee adjustments.** Due to market forces, fee adjustments typically contribute only incrementally to net revenue growth.
- **Debt Service Obligations.** Debt service payments increased \$762,363 in FY 2007 as a part of the financing of Laurel Hill Golf Club. In prior years, the annual debt service obligation was slightly more than \$1 million annually, plus a requirement that the Revenue Fund maintain a level of net revenue before debt service sufficient to meet 125% of annual debt service payments. This year, the annual payment for debt service rose to \$1.8 million.

- **Cost increases.** Service expectations drive some cost increases (e.g., internet capability, improved air and water quality, and security), and fuel and utility increases are a concern.
- **Limited ancillary revenue generation.** The agency's business model is not very effective at generating ancillary revenue from customers. The vast majority of revenue comes from sources including admission fees, passes, and greens fees. Other successful businesses generate a measurable portion of their revenue from on-site spending for goods and additional services.

The Revenue Fund is entering a new period where significant net revenues will be required for servicing an expanded debt load and reserve requirements over the long term. This represents a juncture at which it may be appropriate for the Board to reassess its goals and expectations for the Fund and its role in providing a significant revenue stream for facility maintenance, renovation, expansion, development and other needs.

Strategic Initiatives

Seek new cost saving opportunities while maintaining service delivery.

Efforts may include:

- Conduct ongoing assessment of revenue/expenditures by department and activity.
- Look critically at staffing levels across the agency.

Seek supplemental funding sources, outside of customers, to recover the cost of providing access to revenue facilities and services to citizens unable to afford fees.

Efforts may include:

- Begin to work with other County agencies on methods to identify citizens in need and manage access to facilities in ways that do not negatively impact the revenue fund.

Develop existing customer base.

Efforts may include:

- Co-promote our services better.
- Use Needs Assessment and customer surveys to determine areas of greatest interest, and operate these types of programs.
- Introduce more cross-site programs and camps.
- Advertise to new customers.

Strengthen customer loyalty.

Efforts may include:

- Establish loyalty/reward program for golfers and RECenter passholders.

Institute customer service management program.

Efforts may include:

- Define the scope of a customer service management program.
- Investigate resources available to implement a program, including purchase of a packaged program, in-house development of a program, or contracting with a professional organization to develop an agency-specific program.

Define the role of the Revenue Fund in all aspects of agency funding requirements (operations, maintenance renovations, facility update renovations, capital development, and service growth) and the degree of return that is desired.

At present, the Park Authority lacks a clear definition of the use of net revenues for items including capital maintenance, facility renovations, and development of revenue enhancing facilities. Absent clear expectations, it is difficult to establish meaningful net revenue targets.

Efforts may include:

- Define and prioritize the use of net revenues (e.g. emergency repairs, routine capital maintenance, facility renovations, new facility development, information technology infrastructure and systems).
- Establish total net revenue target and percent allocation to prioritized uses.

Consider the prioritization of capital funding for revenue-generating facilities as compared with free-use facilities.

Efforts may include:

- Increase the weighting of capital facilities that will contribute positively to net revenue when developing priorities for funding.

Revise the process of determining cost of services and begin to recover agency-wide Revenue Fund overhead costs from fees.

Efforts may include:

- Update agency-wide overhead cost allocation to operating units and begin accounting for and recovering those costs in the fee adjustment process.

Implications

Revenue Fund viability is necessary in order to meet Park Authority Board goals and expectations for the Fund. The Revenue Fund allows the County to offer twice the park-related services than could otherwise be provided with tax dollars alone. If we do not ensure the long-term viability of the Revenue Fund, the County risks decreased services or increased fees in order to maintain service levels.

Fund Long-Term Plans

This strategic objective is focused on the need to seek and obtain funding via bonds, general fund, revenue fund and other governmental funding sources, including state and federal grants, to fund long-term plans such as the Capital Improvement Plan, Natural Resource Management Plan, Cultural Resource Management Plan, and Facilities Lifecycle Sustainability Plan.

Background

Long-term plans are funded through voter-approved general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, general funds, revenue funds, and state and federal grants. Public support for parks has generally been strong; however, discretionary public funding has diminished as mandated funding items increase and pressure mounts to maintain or reduce tax rates. It is of note that the Park Authority's allocation from the General Fund has declined over the past several years.

The Capital Improvement Plan, based upon the 2004 Needs Assessment, is significantly under-funded, and the gap grows as land prices skyrocket, construction costs escalate, and population increases. Natural and cultural stewardship issues have risen in importance in the County's areas of focus, but funds to maintain and sustain resources to standards are insufficient. Aging facility maintenance and renovation needs are critical, yet have no dedicated funding sources and compete with capital bond funding for new facilities.

Securing funds that proportionally, predictably, and adequately support the Park Authority's ability to meet the current and long-term needs of citizens requires strategic action.

The benefits that would accrue to citizens by funding our long-term plans are both immediate and future focused, and would be realized by individuals, communities, the local economy and the environment. Major long-term plans adopted by the Park Authority include:

Needs-based Capital Improvement Plan: This is the product of an extensive public process and identifies near, immediate, and long-term land, new facility, and renovation needs. The plan provides guidance to policy makers who decide on park bond authorization amounts and projects.

Natural Resource Management Plan: This plan defines issues and actions necessary to guide environmental stewardship management efforts.

Cultural Resources Management Plan: This plan defines issues and actions necessary to guide cultural resource stewardship management efforts.

Facilities Lifecycle Sustainability Plan: This plan includes a renovation/replacement schedule for all facility and infrastructure assets owned by the Park Authority, based on estimated lifecycles for each facility type and year of installation. Parts of this plan are considered in the Capital Improvement Plan.

In recent years, the Park Authority has created a variety of long-term plans that are critical to the future success of the agency and serve to guide the agency in achieving its mission.

Many of these plans align with the County's Environmental Vision and Stewardship Values and mandates to create fiscally responsible Capital and Financial Plans that reflect citizen needs. The Park Authority is a leader in stewardship and a provider of quality leisure opportunities, and these long-range plans help maintain our leadership status.

Funding for these long-term plans is dependent on the development and allocation of resources for implementation, and the challenge of balancing priorities determines how these long-term plans will be implemented.

Strategic Initiatives

Develop a public information plan. This plan would demonstrate and communicate to citizens and policy makers the value and links between the need to fund long-term plans and the agency's unique ability to implement the plans that benefit the county's environment and quality of life.

Enlist partners (Board of Supervisors, EQAC, Environmental Coordinating Committee) to help advocate for funding for our long-term plans.

Pursue grants planning efforts where funds could support infrastructure support, improvement needs, or strategic development opportunities.

Implications

With adequate funding for long-term plans, the Park Authority can better achieve its mission to enhance citizen quality of life. The Park Authority's role in the community's quality of life is consistently validated by high levels of support for bond referenda, high park usage percentages, and high park user satisfaction levels. Securing a predictable share of the County's tax dollar for the Park Authority benefits all county citizens.

Without adequate funding, there exists the risk that these long-term plans will not be implemented. Inadequate funding of the plans may also result in deferred projects, increased service-level deficiencies, reduced facility quality, delayed renovation, and deferred stewardship actions.

Expand Funding Sources

This strategic objective is focused on developing partnerships and other non-traditional funding sources to create new diverse opportunities to secure money or in-kind services.

Background

The Park Authority's ability to meet facility and service demands from traditional governmental funding alone is limited. The Needs Assessment identifies far more in facility development than the Park Authority will be able to complete with projected bond funding. Internal competition for funds for new development, renovation, land acquisition, and stewardship can only be alleviated with alternative funding and successful partnerships to meet citizens' needs.

The Park Authority is facing numerous issues and opportunities which it will not be able to capitalize on due to resource limitations, including both facility development and service opportunities. For example, the Needs Assessment identifies the need for \$226,514,564 in new facilities by 2013; the current capital program projects \$165,000,000 in total bond funding, a deficit of \$61,514,564 before accounting for land acquisition and renovation needs. Total need is \$376,736,645, which represents a deficit of \$211,736,645. Furthermore, the need for land, facilities and services exceeds bond and operational funding.

The Chairman of the Board of Supervisors has stated a goal of 10 percent of the County to be held by the Park Authority as parkland, which represents approximately 1,700 additional acres. However, funding for additional acquisition is limited.

The Park Authority is experiencing an increase in acreage and facilities without an increase in support funding (operational funding per acre has decreased 15% in the last five years), and aging facilities in need of maintenance and renovation.

In addition, there have been numerous budget issues and adjustments over the past several years that impact the agency's ability to fund all activities adequately, including the shift of funding support from the General Fund to the project-based General Capital Improvement Fund for non-capitalizing maintenance and repairs; shift of General Fund overhead and support costs to the Revenue Fund; transfer of program alignment from one agency to another (e.g. Leisure Enterprises, Athletic Field Maintenance); continued pressure for budget reductions; and lack of inflation growth in the budget for general fund expenditures.

Although the Park Authority defines partnerships as one of its values, it lacks a defined policy, authority, and expectations for developing successful ventures. Individual units seek and develop a wide range of relationships with varying degree of scope. In addition, there is little formal structure or guidance on how to effectively pursue partnerships.

Over the past several years, the Park Authority has begun to work more closely with other county agencies in the pursuit of common goals. The Park Authority can be a valuable partner in some of the county's strategic initiatives, such as Strengthening Neighborhoods, Building Communities. Involvement with other agencies and organizations in these initiatives often opens the door to other opportunities.

While there is never a perfect time to test new funding opportunities, we must begin to explore new sources of funds now while we have time and resources. Since a large percentage of the Park Authority's funding comes from the general fund, it would be prudent to consider alternatives now, as we will be at risk of being unable to provide a full range of expected services during the next general fund downturn.

The engagement of other parties and interest groups can be leveraged to address some of these needs and opportunities, providing increased service delivery or cost avoidance in the construction of new facilities. Examples of these partnerships include Turner Farm, Laurel Hill, Rec-PAC, wellness programming, and events such as the summer concert series.

Strategic Initiatives

Develop policy, authority, and accountability for seeking alternative funding sources and partnerships.

A consolidated, coordinated, and cost-effective approach to seeking alternative funding sources and developing partnerships will minimize duplication of effort and multiple solicitations to the same groups and organizations, while creating an internal resource for success.

Efforts may include:

- Establish guidelines and training in developing and managing partnerships to enhance the potential for success on major initiatives.

Develop a structure and training to more effectively pursue non-tax-based funding sources not traditionally used by the Park Authority.

These may include foundation sponsorship; community adoption; voluntary fees; sponsored events; corporate promotions; corporate leases and partnerships; conservation easements; "sweat-equity" programs; privatization; joint partnerships; community outreach; and class/camp partnerships with schools. The Fairfax County Park Foundation could serve as a leader in this effort, as it exists to strengthen the connection and commitment of corporate and individual neighbors to their parks, inspire philanthropy, and manage a comprehensive fundraising program including donations and partnerships.

Identify priority projects for which to seek alternative funding or partnership opportunities, with a focus on revenue opportunities.

Implications

Failure to explore additional funding sources, and continued reliance on the general fund, may result in a decreased ability to provide quality facilities and services to the citizens of Fairfax County.

Advance Stewardship

This strategic objective is focused on the need to exercise our obligation and responsibility to protect and preserve our natural and cultural resources, and position the Park Authority as a leader in the education, advocacy and demonstration of stewardship "best practices" for the county and beyond.

Background

The Park Authority has a clear mission and policy direction regarding our stewardship practices, including the Strategic Plan, Natural Resource Management Plan, Cultural Resource Management Plan, and Park Authority Policy Manual. The Park Authority has defined stewardship as "the careful and responsible management of the natural and cultural resources entrusted to us by the citizens of Fairfax County in order to ensure their integrity for present and future generations."

Natural resource protection and management ensures quality of life for our residents and provides valuable ecosystem services, such as cleaning our air and water and helping to provide a healthy environment for us in which to live. Cultural resources fit together clues that reveal the picture of Virginia life in the past. As development in the County increases, the documentation and protection of cultural resources becomes even more important. Our natural and cultural resources are rapidly degrading and we have an obligation to protect the financial and intrinsic benefits these resources provide.

The Park Authority's stewardship role falls into four main categories: protect resources on parklands; educate staff and the public about the benefits and importance of stewardship; provide expertise for staff, residents and other agencies in best practices for stewardship; and advocate stewardship at the local, regional, state and federal levels.

Fairfax County is a rapidly urbanizing county. As the county's largest landowner, much of the responsibility for preserving Fairfax County's rich natural and cultural resource heritage rests with the Fairfax County Park Authority.

We are facing mounting stakeholder expectations, while at the same time facing expectations to provide park facilities and amenities for active recreation. Other stakeholder interests include the Board of Supervisors' Environmental Agenda; Environmental Coordinating Committee Initiatives; County Water Resource Initiatives; and Environmental Quality Advisory Council.

The Park Authority has acquired a significant amount of land, but currently does not have the capacity to actively manage and protect its natural resources, which are degrading without active management and protection. Natural resources must be managed to ensure their health and protect them from threats such as overgrazing by deer, invasive non-native plants, encroachments by our park neighbors, erosion and pollution from stormwater, and fragmentation of valuable wildlife habitat. We must begin to actively manage resources to prevent further degradation, including invasive management, forest treatment plans, meadow management, stream restoration, and historic site preservation. In addition, cultural resources are non-renewable resources. Once they are destroyed, they are gone forever. Therefore, we must manage them effectively.

The Park Authority must also make clear, well-informed decisions on resource protection and restoration as well as facility development; encourage employees to better support stewardship in their everyday job duties with the proper tools and education; and encourage citizens to better support stewardship practices in their everyday lives with additional outreach and education.

The Park Authority has committed to the Board of Supervisors, its citizens and its employees to expanding comprehensive stewardship efforts. In order to fully embrace that responsibility, implementation of the components identified in the Natural Resource Management Plan and Cultural Resource Management Plan is essential. Currently, we are doing everything we can with existing resources – making changes to policy and practices, educating staff and residents, and asking all Fairfax County Park Authority staff to help where they can. We are now at a critical stage in which we cannot continue to make significant progress without additional staff and funding.

By implementing the Natural Resource Management Plan and Cultural Resource Management Plan, we will best ensure integration of resource protection into all of our planning, development, operations, and management activities; the agency will be armed with the information, policies and practices needed to preserve and protect what little natural areas and cultural resources remain in the county; and staff and citizens will be engaged and educated in resource stewardship.

Strategic Initiatives

Provide dedicated funding and staff to actively manage natural and cultural resources.

Efforts may include:

- Begin the first phase of a natural resource management program to include securing several staff positions and funding for operations, consultant support and equipment.
- Finalize the first phase of the cultural resource management program which will include staff positions and resources to implement the initiatives identified in the plan.
- Develop a menu of funding options for one-time funding opportunities. Establish minimum funding thresholds to accomplish significant results.
- Consider re-assignment of work duties across the agency to optimize resource management activities.
- Ensure we have the capacity to manage stewardship projects in the 2008 bond.

Develop criteria, best practices, and policy to enable better decision making regarding resource management and protection.

Efforts may include:

- Evaluate existing best practices and policy related to resource management.
- Formalize practices in policy and procedures.
- Develop criteria and thresholds for decision making regarding resource protection.

Educate staff, the Park Authority Board, and the public on stewardship and engage them in action to advance stewardship.

Efforts may include:

- Continue the work of the Stewardship Education Team to develop methods and

initiatives for education of staff, the Board, and the public.

- Continue and expand stewardship activities and programs given by all divisions for the public.
- Develop an evaluation mechanism by citizens and/or stakeholders that helps us gauge our progress.

Implications

If we fail to implement the Natural Resource Management Plan and Cultural Resource Management Plan, we risk loss of credibility with our citizens and partners, continued degradation of resources, and potential impact on other operations in competition for funding. If we do not act, our forests will not regenerate, our water and air will continue to degrade, our important clues to our past will be lost, and our residents will no longer be able to enjoy the beauty of these resources.

Develop a Business Strategy

This strategic objective is focused on the need to develop and implement long-term plans that will accomplish targeted financial and service goals. The primary focus is on the development of a comprehensive business strategy for the Park Revenue Fund (Fund 170); however, other business strategies may develop as a result of this initiative.

Background

There is a need to increase the financial stability of the Park Revenue Fund. Net revenue expectations have not been met for the last several years, and projections show that expenses will soon begin to exceed revenues.

While Fund 170 finances are managed collectively at the fund level, business planning efforts are fragmented (occurring sporadically and primarily for individual units), are generally geared toward the near-term, and focus largely on service delivery (service planning and facility development planning are not coordinated).

Currently, business initiatives revolve around programmatic adjustments and enhancements at site and unit levels that have minimal impact on the Fund as a whole. This approach prevents agency-wide strategic focus to address issues such as Fund 170 agency-wide overhead or development of new business opportunities that can have measurable impact on the Fund.

Financial pressures within Fund 170 necessitate more comprehensive business planning activities that involve all businesses in the Fund, contain both short-term and long-term perspectives, and include both cost and revenue strategies as well as service and facility initiatives.

Strategic Initiatives

Develop an agency-wide business plan that incorporates both capital development and operational business components.

The agency lacks a formalized long-term plan for incorporating new and/or expanded revenue streams (new facilities, expansions, major program initiatives) into the Comprehensive Fund Management Plan projection based on projected time frames that revenue facilities would come on-line in the future, anticipated facility scope and projected use/revenues and operating costs. A Park Authority long-term business plan will improve forecasting and projections of future revenue and expenses, and better coordinate capital improvement and operational planning.

Develop business models to capitalize on ancillary/on-site spending.

Currently, revenue is derived almost entirely from admission fees, passes, and class registration fees related to core services. Most similar recreation and entertainment service providers generate much greater income from ancillary services such as retail sales, food service, and personal services.

Efforts may include:

- Investigate opportunities to capture additional revenue through sales of goods and expanded personal services.

Implications

An agency-wide business plan will serve to better focus our resources towards accomplishment of the plan's objectives, most notably stabilization of the revenue fund. If we fail to develop this business strategy, the agency's focus will remain scattered and will lack comprehensive, agency-wide targets. Furthermore, lack of an agency-wide business plan limits our ability to develop and implement long-term, coordinated strategies that will serve to stabilize the Park Revenue Fund.

Create a Broad Support Base

This strategic objective is focused on the need to better position ourselves in the community-at-large through demonstrating the value that is received from our organization; to create a positive frame of reference in the minds of the community so that the Park Authority – including all of its features and services – becomes increasingly and consistently viewed as essential throughout Fairfax County; to create, nurture, and sustain beneficial, mutually rewarding relationships with our customers and stakeholders; and to communicate our unique identity so people know, value, and support us.

Background

Fairfax County residents and Park Authority stakeholders most commonly are familiar with and relate to individual components or functions of the park system; as a result, awareness of the greater whole and our overall position or role in the community could be improved.

Government agencies, in particular, must care about identity and market positioning for two reasons: mission and money. Every agency occupies some position in the minds and hearts of its constituencies. An organization can either proactively plan its identity, allow it to evolve on its own, or worst of all, let detractors or competitors determine its niche.

As noted by Dr. Richard Florida, professor at George Mason University, in our area, residents value the environment and historical resources, and openness and tolerance, even more than low crime and good schools.¹⁵ It is therefore critically important that we capitalize on this support, in furtherance of our mission and strategic goals.

There have also been studies that indicate how important a role park and recreation services play in creating active and healthy communities. We must strive to document and share this value with our constituents, so that the Park Authority becomes increasingly viewed as essential to quality of life as education and public safety.

Activity-specific positioning and image building needs to be supported with an overall image that creates a frame of reference in the minds of customers, stakeholders, and residents that more clearly defines the Park Authority and what it stands for in the community. Citizens and stakeholders must receive a compelling and consistent message about the significance and impact of the services we provide.

The Park Authority must seek to benchmark the strengths of our organization and market those strengths to generate greater community awareness and support. Through strengthening our support base, customers will perceive that the value they receive from the services we provide is greater than the cost of those services. Stakeholders will develop a finer appreciation for what we do, and will be mobilized to support our cause.

Strategic Initiatives

Create a strong emotional bond between County residents and their parks.

Efforts may include:

- Develop an image that inspires people to desire to preserve and protect parks and open space, and to enjoy them as a major part of their personal satisfaction.
- Raise awareness in the public of the value of cultural and recreation resources (increase in property values and health benefits).

Tap volunteers as a core advocacy base.

Efforts may include:

- Attract volunteers from a cross-section of age and socio-economic backgrounds, including employees from area corporations.
- Implement a volunteer outreach campaign to further advocacy outcomes (including sustaining infrastructure, supporting park bonds, donations, and bequests).

Nurture a strong support base to ensure funding of long-term plans.

Engage partners and volunteers.

Efforts may include:

- Encourage park adoption programs by civic groups, corporations, and communities to create alternative funding sources.
- Promote public, corporate, and school volunteerism to manage park and facility needs and to maximize staff resources.

Implications

If we do not continue to strengthen our support base, the Park Authority risks not being viewed as essential to meaningful quality of life. As a result, customers may not perceive that the value they receive from the services we provide is greater than the cost of those services. Particularly in times of fiscal constraint, this type of support is essential.

Identify New Facilities and Services

This strategic objective is focused on the need to identify opportunities for new facilities and services to meet public need due to population growth, changing demographics and leisure preferences.

Background

To ensure that the park system remains relevant to the lifestyles of Fairfax County residents and meets their needs for recreational facilities and services in the future, the agency must continually engage the community to seek out and address their recreational needs, ensure that service delivery reflects the interests and needs of all Fairfax County residents, understand the needs of underserved groups and seek out ways to serve them, and seek new opportunities to provide value to the community and meet agency business goals. New facilities include additional facilities, expansions, and major renovations that change a facility's use.

The 2004 Needs Assessment established countywide service levels and Park Authority contribution levels for 23 park facility types that enabled the development of a long-term, needs-based Capital Improvement Plan.¹⁶ This effort was a significant initial step toward ensuring that the park system of the future truly reflects the needs and desires of Fairfax County residents. Using broad brush strokes, it identified the basic building blocks of park need, but left many of the details unspecified, such as where new facilities should be planned and located to balance service delivery.

The Needs Assessment findings indicate that county households have broader interests and participate in a larger number of leisure activities than ever. These interests shift over time and often shift before the organization can respond to them. The Needs Assessment findings are also limited because they primarily measured participation in activities that the agency supports, rather than emerging activities and interests. A point of balance is needed in how broad the agency should provide new facilities and services to meet needs and the allocation of resources to do so.

The Needs Assessment effectively identified the types of facilities needed and quantified contribution level goals for the agency to provide by 2013 (e.g., 95 rectangular fields, 55 reservable picnic areas, etc.). What is still missing, however, is a process to determine the nature and geographic distribution of these facilities to best meet service needs. For example, the Needs Assessment directs development of nine neighborhood and two countywide skate parks, but gives no guidance about basic service delivery and operational issues such as how the 11 skate parks should be distributed geographically to best serve skaters, how large the different facilities should be, what kinds of components/services the two types of skate parks should provide to best complement each other, or what role the different types of skate parks play in revenue operations. A process is needed to identify the spatial distribution, character and extent of key facility types identified in the Needs Assessment.

For other facilities, where we have historically been a major provider, such as athletic fields, the challenge is to find opportunities to build new fields at existing parks through redesign, facility conversion and/or redevelopment or acquire land that will support the development of new fields. A comprehensive process for finding opportunities in an environment of diminishing land availability is needed.

Strategic Initiatives

Define a process to determine the nature and geographic distribution of facilities to best meet service needs.

Establish a process to identify and evaluate new business opportunities that may result in new facilities and services.

Efforts may include:

- Establish a process to generate, evaluate, and implement staff-generated ideas.
- Create a process to capture and consider emerging citizen interests that are often offered through various public communication channels including Parkmail comments, comments to Board members, and comments at public meetings and hearings.

Establish a more visible and timely process to identify new facilities and services that might satisfy emerging recreational preferences or meet the leisure needs of underserved populations.

Close alignment of service and facility planning is particularly important since new facilities are an important driver of future revenue growth.

Efforts may include:

- Define processes to bring new ideas to market faster and ensure that service delivery needs and facility planning/development are closely aligned.

Engage the community.

The Park Authority needs to aggressively and continually engage the community to ensure that its service offerings reflect shifting demographic patterns and meet the needs of Fairfax residents, including underserved populations. The Park Authority should continue to embrace the diversity of the county in order to better understand the needs of our community and develop program and service offerings that meet those needs.

Update the Needs Assessment.

Towards the end of the 2006-2010 strategic planning cycle, the 2004 Needs Assessment findings will outlive their intended usefulness and should be updated with the next generation of needs assessment surveys and community involvement.

Implications

In order to successfully achieve this objective, the Park Authority must expand its community engagement, provide for expanded opportunities and processes for exploring staff proposals, improve coordination between operating and planning divisions for development and implementation of new facility/service ideas, create a well-defined process for examining and capturing trends and opportunities in a timely manner, and fund the next cycle of agency needs assessment in the latter part of the strategic planning cycle. If we fail to do so, we risk being less relevant to the citizens over time.

Sustain Park Infrastructure

This strategic objective is focused on developing plans and resources to maintain, restore and eventually replace equipment and facilities to meet needs now and into the foreseeable future.

Background

Aging infrastructure, including park structures, support facilities and systems, continue to age in the absence of a viable life cycling program. The growth in new facilities continues without a corresponding increase in the maintenance funding necessary to maintain them.

There is no viable plan for the maintenance and eventual replacement of major infrastructure. In addition, maintenance funding levels remain relatively stagnant, despite a continuing growth in infrastructure, and contracting prices continue to increase along with maintenance and renovation costs. General Services Administration standards for infrastructure maintenance is an annual \$3.00 per square foot compared to the County's \$.30. In addition, Bond funds are limited in both their amount and use, and cannot be used for routine maintenance.

Strategic Initiatives

Develop a lifecycling plan for all facilities and infrastructure which identifies ongoing maintenance requirements, as well as eventual renovation/replacement.

This plan must be updated on a yearly basis and should identify resources necessary to provide routine and preventive maintenance at minimal sustainable levels.

Establish reserves to assure that major renovation needs are planned and affordable.

Improve facility lifecycle management.

Efforts may include:

- Develop lifecycle plans for buildings and equipment to ensure that resources are available to meet the renovation/replacement needs as they become due.
- Explore adding lifecycle costing to the CIP process.
- Develop long-term preventive maintenance plans for facilities.
- Establish an energy management plan for facilities.

Perform a condition assessment for assets to identify whether funding should be provided to maintain or improve the life of assets or to replace the asset.

Efforts may include:

- Develop mechanism to assess the anticipated life expectancy of capital assets (considering age, depreciation, previous increases to capacity or efficiency of the asset) and determine the funding need for improvement or replacement.

Implications

If sustainability is not addressed, our infrastructure will deteriorate beyond our ability to maintain it. Some facilities may become unusable due to their poor condition, resulting in closures; there will be ongoing safety concerns; and service disruptions will increase at an unacceptable rate. Ultimately, revenue generation will be negatively impacted due to poor building environments and unsightly building conditions.

Furthermore, failure to maintain our park facilities decreases our relevance to the community, leading to dramatically decreased visitation and an invitation for the wrong visitors to take over our parks. Perhaps the most drastic example of this is Central Park in New York in the late 1970's, as the park became a haven for crime and undesirable activity. Only intervention by a private non-profit entity in the Central Park Conservancy saved this great urban park. While we are far from the stage that Central Park was in 1979, it is wise that we remain aware of the danger of not addressing the sustainability of our park system.

In addition, failure to protect the public investment in park facilities may impact public support for future park bonds.

Diversify the Workforce

This strategic objective is focused on the need to recruit and develop a paid workforce reflective of the growing diversity of Fairfax County. It is also focused on the need to educate, train and actively encourage our employees to respect, understand, appreciate and accept differences.

Background

Fairfax County's non-white community grew from 13.8% of the total population in 1980 to 38.2% in 2003, a growth rate of more than 275%. Population diversity is expected to continue in the near future.¹⁷

The number of residents speaking a language other than English at home more than doubled between 1990 and 2003, growing from 143,418 to 302,039. This group represented 84% of the total population growth over this same time period.¹⁸

The Park Authority's workforce is underrepresented compared to community demographics. This is especially true for Hispanic and Asian populations which are the largest minority groups in the County, representing 12.3% and 15.8% of County residents respectively.

An essential strategic approach includes creating an environment that is more welcoming to diverse populations, which enhances both recruitment and retention success, and in turn, increases customer usage among diverse groups.

Achieving a workforce that more closely mirrors the population of the County will facilitate achieving improved service delivery to a diverse population and increase participation in General and Revenue Fund programming.

Strategic Initiatives

Achieve workforce diversity.

Efforts may include:

- Seed and establish targeted, non-traditional minority recruitment partners.
- Establish long-term recruitment and educational partnerships.

Create an inclusive organizational culture.

Efforts may include:

- Implement training and development initiatives across the workforce.
- Expand language training programs to address targeted needs.
- Institute a Diversity Community of Practice.

Implications

The Park Authority risks becoming less relevant to the community over time if the park system is used less by some demographic groups than others. Achieving a workforce that is reflective of the community demographics is a necessary component of the strategy to increase park system participation by diverse groups.

Ensure Workforce Readiness

The focus of this strategic objective is on the need to recruit, prepare and engage our paid workforce to meet future business challenges and expectations.

Background

The current workforce retirement eligibility profile illustrates the need to develop replacements: greater than 50% of the Leadership Team, and 33% of S-19 level positions and above, are eligible for retirement by 2009.

In addition, few of the Park Authority's merit employees are below the age of 30.

Future projections indicate a tight labor market for highly skilled talent. Fairfax County's unemployment rate is routinely lower than the national average.

The pressure by the County to control the merit position count limits the opportunity for workforce growth and requires a high level of commitment and service from existing employees.

Work content is becoming more complex for leaders and technical workers, driving the need to recruit more highly skilled and more highly paid employees.

Highly qualified, committed and satisfied employees are essential to continue the level of excellence expected of the Park Authority.

Planned action to address workforce strategic issues will contribute to the quality of leadership, technical work, and customer service provided by the Park Authority. A high quality workforce will impact park utilization, which impacts citizen quality of life and satisfaction with Fairfax County.

Strategic Initiatives

Create reward programs that are aligned with strategic initiatives and that promote innovation and creativity.

Operationalize Succession Management Plans.

Efforts may include:

- Conduct workforce planning to identify competency areas and positions needed for future success, and design recruitment and development programs to ensure continuity of operations and response to changing mission priorities.
- Introduce and embed learning and development to achieve target performance in technical and leadership competencies for key positions.
- Create a knowledge management database.
- Maintain a technical skill base through development and recruitment.
- Manage existing talent pools.

Strengthen the Organizational Culture.

Efforts may include:

- Strengthen centralized and cross-divisional/cross-agency communications.

- Conduct a culture audit to identify and isolate barriers to organizational performance, such as gaps between stated and actual organization “norms”, as well as misalignment of strategies, structures, and systems.
- Implement biannual employee satisfaction/engagement survey.

Recruit and Retain Quality Staff.

Efforts may include:

- Conduct targeted recruitment activities to fill key positions.
- Establish a steady input of recent college graduates.
- Reestablish a sustainable staffing model that aligns with available labor pool and business needs.
- Retain key individuals (per talent management model).
- Establish a sustainable compensation model.
- Establish long-term learning relationships/partnerships (middle school through college).

Leverage Policy Change.

Efforts may include:

- Leverage human capital policy changes through advocacy with the County Department of Human Resources and other agencies.
- Implement pay and performance recommendations.
- Retain option of modifying Memorandum of Agreement with the County in areas associated with Human Capital.

Implications

Failure to adequately plan for workforce changes and succession management will contribute to long delays in hiring for key positions, inadequate preparation of staff to assume higher-level positions, inability to assimilate outside talent into the organization, and misalignment of staff talents with mission requirements.

Foster Innovation

This strategic objective is focused on the need to create a leadership culture that fosters practices and processes that remove barriers to innovation consistent with accountability. It is centered on the philosophy that employees should be empowered to take or recommend actions that enhance customer service, establish more efficient business processes, and promote new business opportunities. At the same time, agency leadership should be supportive of staff development to acquire competencies needed to develop and implement innovative solutions to achieve strategic goals.

Background

As noted by Dr. Richard Florida, bestselling author of "The Rise of the Creative Class", and a professor at George Mason University, "Every human being is creative". Dr. Florida also believes that employers should realize that human creativity determines an organization's success more than its technology.¹⁹

Over the course of its existence, the Park Authority has progressed through several evolutionary stages, beginning with land banking, followed by facility development and customer awareness. Each stage has required a slightly different organizational focus to effectively meet its challenges. It has been argued that the Park Authority is now on the cusp of a new evolutionary stage, precipitated by the county's build-out, changing public attitudes about the use of parks, maturation of existing park facilities and programs, and an expanded approach to stewardship. The changing organizational environment will stress both operational and capital resources as we seek to redefine our approach to service delivery in some areas. It will also require staff to develop new competencies to effectively manage change, and new management tools to focus staff efforts and establish accountability for results.

The Park Authority of the future will increasingly need to meet its challenges by finding practical solutions to problems through innovation, resourcefulness and opportunistic problem-solving, requiring a different set of competencies than exist widely in the workforce today.

Strategic Initiatives

Create a culture of innovation.

Efforts may include:

- Identify, diagnose and overcome barriers to innovation.
- Provide targeted learning to build competencies to empower staff to better serve customers.
- Support and recognize innovation at all levels.
- Implement an employee suggestion system.
- Migrate from "prescriptive" management styles to "outcome based" approaches.

Utilize effective communication.

Efforts may include:

- Publicize innovations and bright ideas.
- Solicit feedback on service improvements and user needs.

Institute policies and practices consistent with innovation.

Efforts may include:

- Establish policies to support innovative thinking.
- Empower employees to take, or recommend, actions that enhance customer service, establish more efficient business processes, and promote new business opportunities.
- Deploy process improvement methodologies.
- Develop innovation tools (i.e. Mastenbrook Grant).
- Optimize and facilitate utilization of partnerships.
- Evaluate innovation using objective criteria.
- Increase benchmarking of best/next practices of high importance work.
- Develop and operationalize a long-range technology plan.

Implications

Failure to inspire and purposefully embed innovation into the fiber of the organization will contribute to the development of an unhealthy organizational culture, characterized as rigid, stagnant, and underperforming. Outcomes of this culture can include difficulties such as high levels of employee disengagement, “red tape” bound processes, and lethargic responses to change.

The Balanced Scorecard

Excellence is not a destination; it is a continuous journey that never ends.

- Brian Tracy

The Balanced Scorecard, the second tool developed as part of the planning process, is a management tool that provides a comprehensive measure of how our agency is progressing towards achieving its strategic goals. The Balanced Scorecard is a tool for managing the organization's strategy. It is a tool that provides a comprehensive measure of how the organization is progressing toward achieving its strategic goals, and therefore may help to guide decision making.

The Park Authority has chosen the Balanced Scorecard approach because it allows strategy to be the central organizational agenda. It also communicates strategy in a way that can be understood and acted upon. The Balanced Scorecard also serves as a navigational aide, so that every resource and activity in the organization can focus and align to the strategy. Furthermore, the Balanced Scorecard demonstrates linkages across the organization. It allows the focus of agency leadership, human resources, information technology, and financial resources to align with the organization's strategy.

The balanced scorecard is a management system - not just a measurement system - that enables organizations to clarify their vision and strategy and translate them into action. It provides feedback around internal business processes and external outcomes, so that the organization can continuously improve its strategic performance and results.

It is important to note that the balanced scorecard will not be used as a report card or a control system within the agency. Rather, it will be used as one of many tools to communicate our strategic objectives. In conjunction with the strategy map, it will be used to unite our efforts towards meeting our strategic goals; to review our progress in meeting our strategic objectives; and to keep in the forefront the key strategic issues we have identified to focus on through 2010.

The creation of this first balanced scorecard marks a beginning, not the end. The Park Authority fully anticipates that the scorecard will be for us a living document, one that is utilized on an ongoing basis by staff, reviewed quarterly by the Board, and updated on an annual basis, as we work through our strategic priorities over the life of this plan.

Balanced Scorecard Measures

The best way to predict the future is to create it.

- Author Unknown

Strategy	Measures	Baseline	First-year Target	5-year Target
Customer Perspective				
Enhance Citizen Quality of Life	Citizen Quality of Life Rating	80%	80%	85%
	Percentage of County Land Owned by Park Authority	9.4%	9.6%	10.0%
	Percentage of County Land Owned, Managed, and Protected by Park Authority	TBD	TBD	TBD
Protect and Enhance Natural/Cultural Resources	Resource Protection Rating	80%	80%	83%
Create and Sustain Quality Facilities/Services	Facilities and Services Satisfaction Rating	73%	73%	78%
	Percentage of Developable Land Acquired as Identified in the 2004 Needs Assessment	70%	78%	90%
Serve a Diverse Community	Diversity Index	91	91	95
	Percent of Low-Income Households Using Park Authority Parks	72%	72%	77%
	Growth in Youth Participation in Health and Fitness Programs	612,500	613,000	686,000
Financial Perspective				
Ensure Stability of the Revenue Fund	Net Revenue (Fund 170) as a Percentage of Total Revenue	1.41%	1.50%	2.50%
	Percentage of County Households with Revenue Activity	14.1%	14.5%	15.0%
Fund Long-Term Plans	Percentage of Needs Assessment 10-year Capital Improvement Plan Funding Requirements Met	39%	46%	70%
	Natural Resource Management Plan First Phase Funding	\$0	\$650,000, which includes 6 staff	\$650,000, which includes 6 staff
	Cultural Resource Management Plan First Phase Funding	\$0	\$0	\$395,000, which includes 4 staff

Strategy	Measures	Baseline	First-year Target	5-year Target
	General Obligation Bond Funding Per Capita	\$85	\$90	\$95
Expand Funding Sources	Non-traditional Funding Dollars	\$1,921,390 (FY 05)	\$2,448,539	\$4,031,738
Process Perspective				
Advance Stewardship	County Land Protected by Park Authority	23,872	24,335	25,472
	Percentage of Parkland with Active Management Plans	0%	0%	10%
Develop a Business Strategy	None identified at this time. Will be identified as we begin implementation of this initiative.			
Create a Broad Support Base	None identified at this time. Will be identified as we begin implementation of this initiative.			
Identify New Facilities and Services	Annual Completion Percentage of Board-endorsed New Facility Contribution Levels	30%	40%	55%
Sustain Infrastructure	Percentage of Operating Funding Needs Met	84%	84%	90%
	Percentage of Capital Renovation Funding Needs Met	40%	50%	90%
Learning and Growth Perspective				
Diversify the Workforce	Employee Diversity Index	26	28	40
Ensure Workforce Readiness	Succession Management Implementation	40%	50%	100%
	Recruitment/Retention/Development Rating	65%	68%	71%
Foster Innovation	Innovation Rating	74%	76%	80%
	Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) Accreditation	No	No	Yes

Balanced Scorecard Measure Definitions

Citizen Quality of Life Rating

Percent of Fairfax County households that rate Park Authority parks as either extremely or very important to their quality of life. Source: Annual Park Authority Performance Measures Survey.

Percentage of County Land Owned by Park Authority

Percent of all county land owned by (deeded to) the Park Authority.

Percentage of County Land Owned, Managed, and Protected by Park Authority

Percent of all county land owned (deeded to), managed (through leases or other use agreements), and protected (through easements) by the Park Authority.

Resource Protection Rating

Percent of Fairfax County households that consider the natural and cultural resources of Park Authority parks as either extremely or very important to their quality of life. Source: Annual Park Authority Performance Measures Survey.

Facilities and Services Satisfaction Rating

Percentage of park using households from the most recent performance measures survey who rated satisfaction with the overall park system 8-10 on a 10-point scale. "Park using households" refers to those who said they used any park or park facility operated by the Fairfax County Park Authority in the past year. Source: Annual Park Authority Performance Measures Survey.

Percentage of Developable Land Acquired as Identified in the 2004 Needs Assessment

The land acquisition requirement established in the 2004 Needs Assessment through 2010 is 241 acres to specifically support facility development. Qualifying sites consist of unconstrained land of adequate size that will allow the development of needed recreation facilities.

Diversity Index

Compares the percentage of racial and ethnic minority households that visit the park system annually with the same park visitation percentage for all households. An index of 100 would mean that the proportion of racial and ethnic minority households using parks is identical to the park use percentage for all households in Fairfax County. Source: Annual Park Authority Performance Measures Survey.

Percent of Low-Income Households Using Park Authority Parks

Gauges effectiveness of making park facility use and program participation accessible to households in the lowest income strata (defined as households with annual incomes below \$50,000). Source: Annual Park Authority Performance Measures Survey.

Growth in Youth Participation in Health and Fitness Programs

Growth in the participation hours of youth ages 8-18 in Park Authority health and fitness programs. Measures the success of initiatives aimed at increasing program offerings

focused on prompting healthy lifestyles by the County's youth. Participation hours are the number of participants in the program times the number of hours the program runs. This approach permits inclusion of a wide variety of programs, including one-time activities such as workshops and events, recurring meeting classes, and drop-in attendance.

Net Revenue (Fund 170) as a Percentage of Total Revenue

Establishes an annual target for cost recovery (net revenue available for transfer to Fund 371). The FY 2010 target for cost recovery achieves the Board's established target of at least \$800,000 net revenue to set aside for capital and systems infrastructure.

Percentage of County Households with Revenue Activity

This is a measure of market penetration and represents the number of ParkNet households who have purchased passes or classes, as a percentage of total County households. Based on total County households of 386,218 (377,600 Fairfax County and 8,618 Fairfax City).

Percentage of Needs Assessment 10-year Capital Improvement Plan Funding Requirements Met

The percentage of capital funding sources applied towards the projected full capital funding needs. The 2004 Needs Assessment 10-year Capital Improvement Plan projects funding needed for new facilities, renovations, and land acquisition in unadjusted 2004 funding values. The estimated capital funding need through 2010 totals \$229,000,000 in 2004 dollar values.

Natural Resource Management Plan First Phase Funding

Dollars spent on first phase program (first phase represents approximately 15% of the entire program).

Cultural Resource Management Plan First Phase Funding

Dollars spent on first phase program (first phase represents approximately 20% of the entire program).

General Obligation Bond Funding Per Capita

2004 and 2006 General Obligation Bond funds approved, presented on a per capita basis. Sum of 2004 and 2006 referenda and 2005 actual population for Fairfax County provide baseline.

Non-traditional Funding Dollars

Non-traditional funding sources are sources of funding which are not fees, General Obligation Bonds, or General Funded tax dollars. Examples of non-traditional revenue include Proffers, Park Foundation transfers, Corporate Donations, Open Space Donations, Rental Property, Monopole, Interest Earnings, Public Links, Miscellaneous Donations and Grants.

County Land Protected by Park Authority

Total number of acres protected by the Park Authority through ownership and conservation and/or scenic easements.

Percentage of Parkland with Active Management Plans

Percentage of parkland with a resource management plan in place to protect and manage natural and cultural resources, with the capacity for implementation.

Annual Completion Percentage of Board-endorsed New Facility Contribution Levels

Fairfax County Park Authority contribution level goals for 21 park facility types over ten years were endorsed by the Park Authority Board during the 2004 Needs Assessment process.

Source: Needs Assessment.

Percentage of Operating Funding Needs Met

Percent of dollars funded for ongoing operating maintenance needs compared to overall maintenance operating needs as defined by maintenance standards.

Percentage of Capital Renovation Funding Needs Met

Percent of dollars funded for capital renovation needs compared to overall capital renovation needs identified in the 2004 Needs Assessment. Capital Renovation Needs from Needs Assessment through 2010 total \$64,219,034 in 2004 unadjusted values.

Employee Diversity Index

Compares the percentage of Park Authority Asian and Hispanic merit workforce in EEO job categories 1-6 (per annual Diversity plan) to the percentage total of Asian and Hispanic populations in Fairfax County (per DMB budget document). An index of 100 would mean that the proportion of Park Authority Asian and Hispanic merit workforce is the same as the percentage total of Asian and Hispanic populations in Fairfax County.

Succession Management Implementation

Percentage of Succession Management Model implemented.

Recruitment/Retention/Development Rating

Average Park Authority Workforce Survey results, for questions related to recruitment/retention/development.

Innovation Rating

Average Park Authority Workforce Survey results, for questions related to innovation.

Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) Accreditation

The Park Authority will begin the process of pursuing agency accreditation through CAPRA in late fall 2006. This measure tracks the agency's progress towards becoming an accredited agency.

References

- ¹ Code of Virginia, Chapter 27, Sec. 15.1-1228 to 15.1-1238.1
- ² Fairfax County Department of Systems Management for Human Services, *Anticipating the Future: A Discussion of Trends in Fairfax County*, March 2006, page 15.
- ³ Fairfax County Department of Systems Management for Human Services, *Anticipating the Future: A Discussion of Trends in Fairfax County*, March 2006, page 33.
- ⁴ Fairfax County Park Authority, *2005 Performance Measures Survey Findings – A Leadership Team Briefing*, September 8, 2005, page 14.
- ⁵ Fairfax County Department of Systems Management for Human Services, *Anticipating the Future: A Discussion of Trends in Fairfax County*, March 2006, page 11.
- ⁶ Fairfax County Department of Systems Management for Human Services, *Anticipating the Future: A Discussion of Trends in Fairfax County*, March 2006, page 13.
- ⁷ Andrew Kochera, Audrey Straight, and Thomas Guterbock, *Beyond 50.05: A Report to the Nation on Livable Communities Creating Environments for Successful Aging*, AARP Public Policy Institute, p. 4.
- ⁸ Fairfax County Park Authority, *2005 Recreation Trend Report: 4th Annual Report on Nationwide Participation Trends in Sports, Recreation and Fitness Activities*, January 2006, page 25.
- ⁹ Fairfax County Park Authority, *2005 Recreation Trend Report: 4th Annual Report on Nationwide Participation Trends in Sports, Recreation and Fitness Activities*, January 2006, page 25.
- ¹⁰ Based on a comparison of the Fairfax County age profile from the U.S. Census Bureau 2004 American Community Survey and Fairfax County Park Authority enrollment in coded programs between 5/24/2005 and 5/15/2006.
- ¹¹ American Obesity Association. AOA Fact Sheets: Obesity in Youth. Retrieved May 17, 2006 from http://www.obesity.org/subs/fastfacts/obesity_youth.shtml.
- ¹² National Recreation and Park Association, *Meeting the Needs*, April 2006, page 2.
- ¹³ Vice Admiral Richard H. Carmona, M.D. M.P.H., FACS United States Surgeon General, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, as cited in National Recreation and Park Association, *Meeting the Needs*, April 2006, page 2.
- ¹⁴ Frank Hugelmeyer, President of Outdoor Industry Association, as cited in National Recreation and Park Association, *Meeting the Needs*, April 2006, page 3.
- ¹⁵ Courier, *The Value of Creativity*, March 17, 2006, page 4.
- ¹⁶ 2004 Needs Assessment Final Report, located online at http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/needsassessment_final.pdf
- ¹⁷ Fairfax County Department of Systems Management for Human Services, *Anticipating the Future: A Discussion of Trends in Fairfax County*, March 2006, page 15.
- ¹⁸ Fairfax County Department of Systems Management for Human Services, *Anticipating the Future: A Discussion of Trends in Fairfax County*, March 2006, page 15.
- ¹⁹ Courier, *The Value of Creativity*, March 17, 2006, page 4.